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SUBJECT: ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY MULL,S APRIL 11 MEETING
WITH EUROPEAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR-GENERAL HARADA

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: U.S.-Japan cooperation is critical to enhancing Japan's relationship with NATO and to preventing arms sales to China, DG Harada told A/S Mull April 11. Prime Minister Abe's speech to the North Atlantic Council earlier this year marked the beginning of a transformation of Japanese policy that will increasingly enable participation in NATO activities. On the arms embargo, AA/S Mull and DG Harada agreed that pressure on EU countries must be maintained even though possible arms sales to China has recently fallen off the EU agenda. The United States appreciates Japan's stance on cluster munitions, AA/S Mull told DG Harada. Separately, he noted, the U.S. has been surprised by the resistance to missile defense in Europe.
End Summary.

Japan-NATO Cooperation: Moving Forward Step-by-Step

¶2. (C) Japan appreciates U.S. support for strengthening Japan-NATO relations, MOFA European Affairs Bureau Director General Chikahito Harada told Acting Assistant Secretary for Political Military Affairs Stephen Mull during an April 11 meeting. Pointing to Prime Minister Abe's January policy speech at the North Atlantic Council as a herald of the deepening relationship between Japan and NATO, DG Harada said that Japan is now studying the Riga Summit-established partnership tools for further cooperation opportunities to translate PM Abe's speech into concrete action.

¶3. (C) Although the elections in Japan this year will complicate any new policy planning, significant changes are under consideration, DG Harada stated. Noting that Japan interprets the constitution-related ban on collective self-defense as preventing Japanese participation in military operations, DG Harada told AA/S Mull that Japan would like to send observers to joint exercises as part of its planned "step-by-step" increase in cooperation with NATO. A review of collective self-defense is underway, and MOFA is only one of several forces in the government pushing for a more flexible defense framework that better meets global needs and challenges. So far, there has been no significant political backlash against the review, according to DG Harada, who was optimistic about public support for cooperation with NATO in general. Japan also plans to send representatives to the NATO non-proliferation conference later this month, said DG Harada, who requested that the United States continue supporting Japan-NATO cooperation.

¶4. (C) Japan's increased cooperation with NATO benefits both Japan and the United States, replied AA/S Mull, praising

Japan's growing participation in global roles. Former PM Koizumi and current PM Abe both worked hard to creatively expand joint activities with the military alliance in spite of constitutional hurdles, AA/S Mull noted. Although NATO's increased outreach to partner countries has not always been unanimous, the United States has always supported expanding cooperation with Japan and will continue to advocate for a deeper partnership with Japan. Office of European Security and Political Affairs Director Gary Robbins added that the United States understands that Japan wants to avoid an overly structured relationship with NATO and prefers to work on less politically sensitive initiatives like humanitarian relief activities. Although the United States is hoping for a more expansive relationship, any cooperation is welcome, said Robbins.

China Arms Embargo Secure - For Now

¶ 15. (C) Japan cautiously welcomes the European Union not pushing as hard as before for the right to sell arms to China, DG Harada stated. Thanks in large part to a change in Germany's position, lifting the arms embargo no longer appears to be on the European Union's immediate agenda, although some EU members have not given up. When French Defense Minister Michle Alliot-Marie visited Japan last month, she raised the issue with PM Abe, claiming that it is a political issue, not a military one. DG Harada noted that China also continues to pressure EU countries to lift the embargo.

¶ 16. (C) Japan has also been voicing its concerns to other countries that export arms to China, including the Ukraine and Russia, said DG Harada, stressing that the issue is very much one of security, not politics, for Japan. Japan has

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also explained its position to China, stating that the lack of transparency in China's military buildup lies at the center of the debate. Saying that MOFA regularly sends demarche instructions to its embassies in European capitals, DG Harada finished by asking for the United States' continued support in maintaining pressure on the European Union to keep the arms embargo in effect.

¶ 17. (C) The United States continues to oppose lifting the embargo on arms sales to China, affirmed AA/S Mull. Although political change in the European Union has helped the situation, too many countries still want to sell arms to China. The United States will keep pressure on EU members to maintain the embargo, AA/S Mull assured DG Harada.

Missile Defense in Europe: Surprising Resistance

¶ 18. (C) Political resistance to the United States' missile defense plans in Europe is reminiscent of the 1980s, said AA/S Mull. In spite of the groundwork that the United States laid with Russia before announcing the development of missile defense in Poland and the Czech Republic, the same political forces that opposed U.S. regional involvement 25 years ago now oppose U.S. missile defense programs in Europe. Specifically, Russia has successfully mobilized EU public opinion against the missile defense plan, as misinformation about missile defense programs appears widespread. Although missile defense rockets do not carry a nuclear payload, many Europeans are protesting because they object to nuclear payloads. AA/S Mull stated that the United States must do a better job explaining why new security threats like Iran and North Korea call for international missile defense. When DG Harada wondered why Russia was so quiet about missile defense in Japan, Robbins observed that some Europeans were raising environmental and health concerns about the X-band radar, and requested that Japan share with those Europeans Japan's experiences with the radar system.

U.S. Appreciates Japan's Position on Cluster Munitions

¶9. (C) The United States appreciates Japan not signing the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in Norway last year, AA/S Mull said to DG Harada. Although the United States is sensitive to the danger of cluster munitions, the proposed agreement could get in the way of legitimate military use and affect ongoing operations. The United States intends to work with its European partners as well as with Japan, South Korea, and China to move the debate into a more constructive venue, said AA/S Mull.

¶10. (C) This cable has been cleared by AA/S Mull.

SCHIEFFER